XCVII.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Strange NEWS From Oxfordshire:

BEING

A true and faithful ACCOUNT of a Wonderful and Dreadful

EARTHQUAKE

That happened in those parts

On *Monday* the 17th of this present *September*, 1683.

Written in a LETTER from Wallingford *in* Oxfordshire.

MEn that do not govern themselves by the established Rules of Piety, and acknowledgment of Celestial Wonders, may perhaps look upon the ensuing Relation as a thing not worth their Cognizance; but, Sir, as you have been my long and ancient Acquaintance, I do not send you this Narration to impose upon your self, much less upon the World. I know the Credit you have in it, and for me to lessen it, would be a piece of Ingratitude no way becoming the Obligations I have received at your hands.

Sir, some men deride the Wonders of the middle Region, as if they were onely the effects of Heat and Moisture. What would become of the World, if it were not for the Productions of those two Elements? Now then, Sir, to give you something for the exercise of your Fancy, observe the ensuing Narration.

Sir, should I speak this of many other parts of the World, it were no Novelty. Earthquakes are frequent in *Italy*; and in *Constantinople* they have shaken the Foundations of *Santa Sophia* in such a manner, that they have been forc'd to buttress the grand Tower of that Church with all the Art imaginable.

But

But I am now coming to tell ye what lately happen'd in *England*, not many miles off, where theſe Accidents are not uſual.

Sir, upon *Monday* the 17th of this inſtant *September*, the Morning being very clear and calm, not the leaſt Wind ſtirring, there was ſuddenly heard a ſtrange and (for many years before not known) a moſt furious Commotion of the Air, attended with an unuſual ſhaking and trembling of the Earth, and indeed of every thing that before ſeemed to ſtand fixt and ſtable upon it. Houſes rock'd like ſo many huge Cradles, and in them Tables, Stools, Trunks, and Cheſts rowl'd to and fro with the violence of the ſhog; which put the People into ſo great a Conſternation, that they ran away and forſook their Habitations; as well they might, amaz'd at ſuch an unuſual and prodigious Accident. They that lay in their Beds cared not for any ſuch kind of Rocking, and therefore in great fear and haſte forſook their diſordered Reſt. They that were aſleep were awaken'd with ſo much Amazement, that they forgot their Habiliments, to ſeek for ſhelter; but where-ever they fled, found themſelves ſtill in the ſame danger.

This Autmn Ague-fit of the Earth-Hag put us into a ſtrange Conſternation all about *Tame* and *Wallingford*; but that which moſt troubled me was, that it had threatened ſome of the foundations of our ancient Colledges in *Oxford*, whoſe venerable Piles I am glad to ſee ſtand ſafe however without any detriment. Heaven knows how much the damage might have been; but Heaven be praiſed the damage was no more than onely Fear.

This is obſervable, that a poor labouring man, a mean Thraſher, being at his Work in a Barn in a ſmall Village two miles diſtant from *Wallingford*, felt this ſame ſhaking of the Earth, which he minded not at firſt; but when he heard the Rafters of the Barn begin to crack, away he ran, flung down his Flail, and put the whole Street in an Uproar.

Others in Stables looking after their Horſes, were in ſuch a terrour, that they run out and put the Neighbouring Inhabitants into the ſame Amazement.

This ſhaking and trembling of the Earth, though it continued not long, was more than has happened in *England* for theſe many years; and it is not frequently found that ſuch Earthquakes happen in Iſlands: but you may aſſure your ſelf that this is a Truth, and ſuch a one as you may be ſatisfied comes from a Friend that will not impoſe upon ſuch another Friend as you, any thing but what you may fairly commit to Publick.

Yours, &c.

Entred according to Order.

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